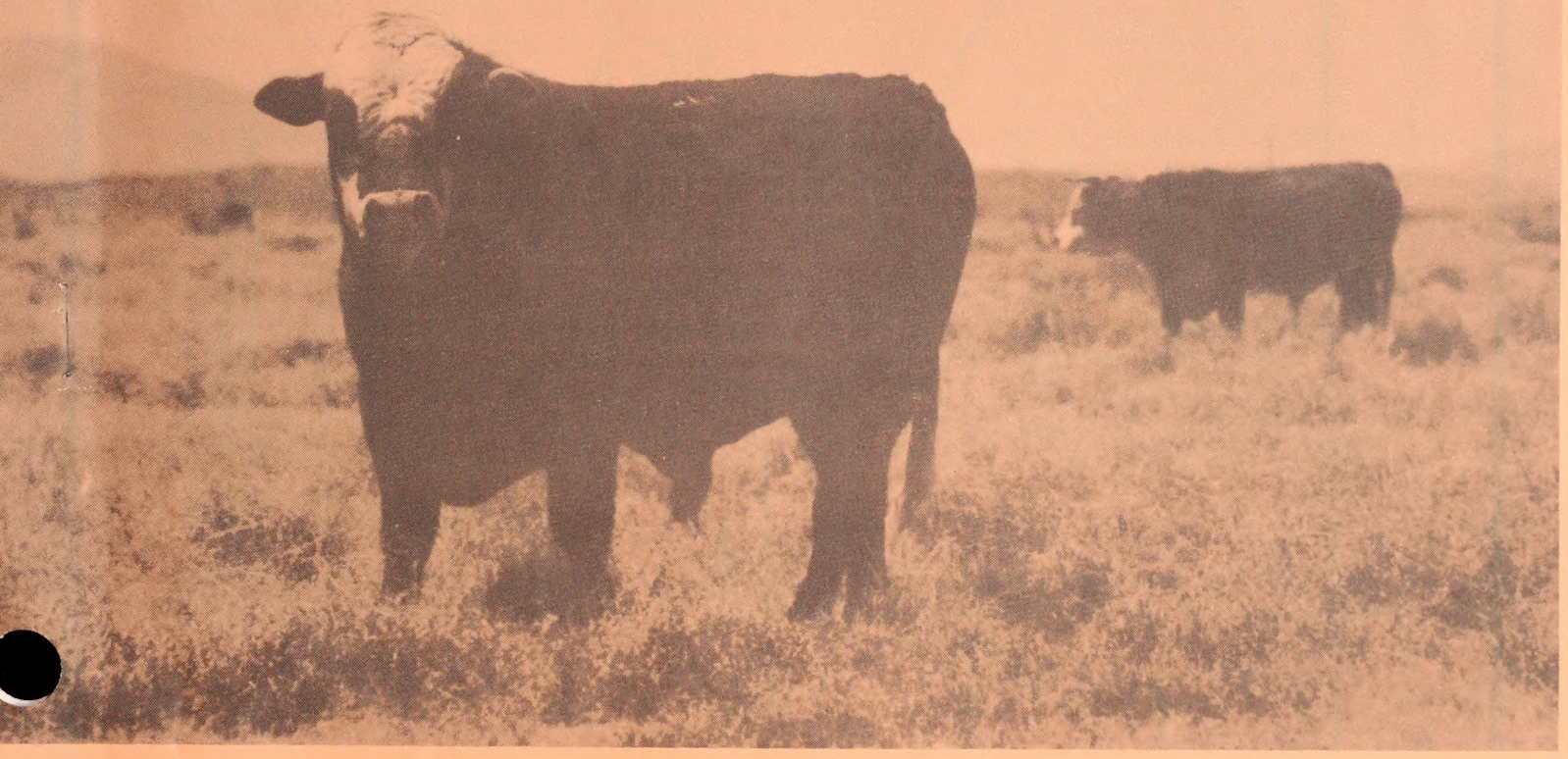
WHITE SANDS RESOURCE AREA

RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY UPDATE



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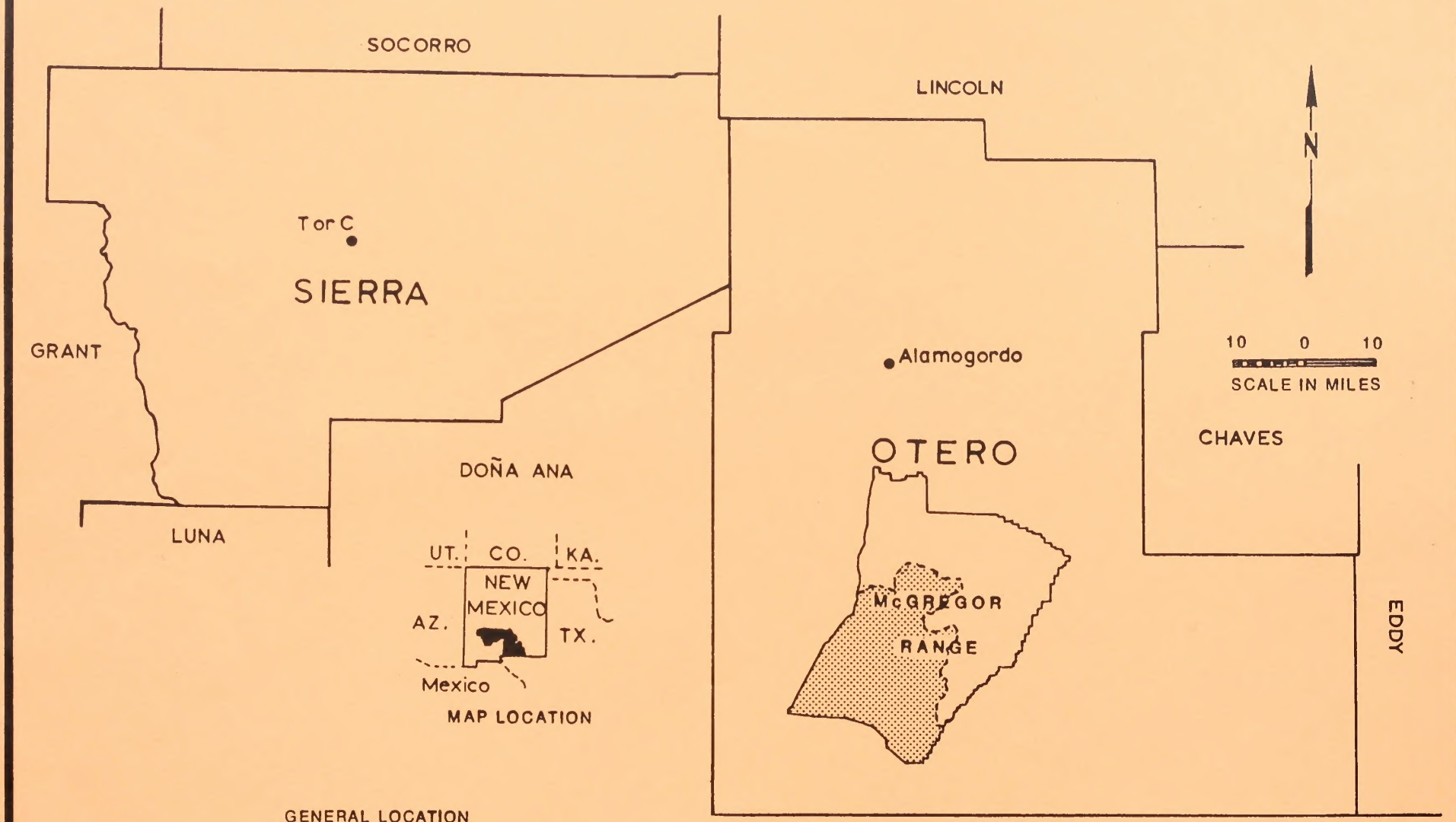

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RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The White Sands Resource Area (WSRA) Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) was published in July 1987, and included management objectives and actions for both Sierra and Otero counties. Sierra County was originally covered by the the Southern Rio Grande Planning Area RPS and will now be included in this report. This update reports the progress made in monitoring adjustments in grazing use and completion of rangeland improvements since the fourth update was issued for Sierra County in April 1986 and the initial report for Otero in 1987.

DECISIONS AND AGREEMENTS

Letters were sent to 29 permittees in Otero County notifying them that their allotments are categorized as "M" or "C" allotments and that no adjustments would be made in stocking rates or carrying capacity (24 "M" allotments, 5 "C" allotments).

On nine allotments in Sierra County, there were eight rangeland use agreements and one decision issued as a result of the analysis of the 5-year monitoring program. Rangeland monitoring commenced on these nine allotments in the spring of 1983 and concluded in the spring of 1987. The agreements decision were the product of field and study data analysis, interpretation, and evaluation involving consultation, coordination, and cooperation with the permittee, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the New Mexico Range Improvement Task Force, the New Mexico State Land Office, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Allotment field tours were attended by representatives of the interested parties throughout the summer of 1987. Individual allotment problems, goals, objectives, and management needs to address site specific objectives were considered and incorporated into the final agreements.

As a result of the nine agreements/decision regarding stocking rates, studies indicated that the carrying capacity is correct on four allotments (6067, 6075, 6079, 6080), suspended preference animal unit months (AUMs) were reinstated on three allotments (6020, 6022, 6041), an increase in number of livestock will be phased in over a 2-year period on one allotment (6017), and additional study and consultation will be conducted on one allotment (6037).

RANGELAND IMPROVEMENTS

The following rangeland improvements were completed in 1986 and 1987. Also shown are BLM funds expended and rancher contributions in the improvements.

Rangeland Improvement	Year Completed	Allotment Number	BLM Funding	Rancher Contributed Funding
Sierra County				
Willow Spring Fence	1986	6091	$ 6,000	1,600
Palomas Brush	1987	6041	$36,910	0
Huerfano Brush	1987	6080	$53,751	0
Percha Creek Fence	1987	6085	$12,092	0
Percha Creek Brush	1987	6085	$30,061	1,049
Buckhorn Well	1987	6017		
Otero County				
East Danley Fence	1986	7014	$10,900	1,800
Lewis Tanks	1986	9035	$ 7,191	0
White Sands Pipeline	1987	7051	$22,795	0

These projects involved:

9.3 miles of fence
9.6 miles of pipeline
6,393 acres of brush control
6 troughs
1 cattleguard
2 dirt tanks
5 storage tanks

The following projects are carry-overs from previous years and should be completed in 1988:

1. Mud Mountain Pipeline and Well
2. Buckhorn Well
3. China Pipeline
4. Huerfano Pipeline
5. Graham Prescribed Burn
6. Johnson Prescribed Burn

PROJECTS TO BE COMPLETED IN 1988

	Project Name	BLM Funding	Rancher Contribution	Allotment No.
1.	Cooper Tank	10,000	--	9031
2.	Cooper Well No. 2	18,500	1,100	9031
3.	Cooper Well No. 1	10,000	9,600	9031
4.	Scott Pipelines	11,600	1,500	9036
5.	Lewis Brush	40,000	--	9036
6.	Pup Canyon Brush	88,500	--	9035
7.	Cuchillo Brush Control	40,000	--	6108
8.	Gilmore Tank	10,000	--	6022
9.	Iron Mountain Well	9,000	10,500	6072
10.	Willow Spring Well	15,000	700	6091

The following projects were completed by permittees under Section 4 Permits:

	Rangeland Improvement	Allotment No.
1.	Canada de la Cruz Trap	6012
2.	Lake Tank Pipeline	9048
3.	Straddle Tub	6022
4.	Nimberly Fence	9018
5.	W. W. Pipeline	6083
6.	Crispy Storage Tank	6113
7.	Greer Corrals	6056
8.	Salado Mountain Cattleguard	6027
9.	Shortline South Pipeline	7068
10.	Sibley Hills Fence	6005
11.	Section 15 - Boundary Fence	6005
12.	Homestead Tank Pipeline	6021
13.	Cain Livestock Trail	6020
14.	Harvey Pipeline No. 1	9010
15.	Top Tank Pipeline	9010
16.	Mountain Drift Fence	6039

MONITORING STUDIES

Intensive monitoring studies will be continued on 23 "I" category Sierra County allotments in the spring of 1988. It is felt there is sufficient information available from the collection of 5 years of data to make determinations regarding stocking rates and allotment objectives. Permittees and others affected or interested parties will be notified about the analysis of the studies and will be invited to participate.

Monitoring studies will begin on 23 "I" category allotments in Otero County this spring. These studies include the collection of precipitation data, actual livestock use, key forage species utilization, wildlife use, ecological condition, and trend data.

Intensive monitoring studies initiated in 1984 on 11 Otero County allotments will continue.

The WSRA in cooperation with the BLM State Office is developing a monitoring plan which will outline the intensity and frequency of monitoring studies for all allotments in the area depending on the category of each allotment.

MCGREGOR RANGE

New legislation (the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986, Public Law 99-606) was enacted on November 6, 1986, withdrawing public lands within McGregor Range for military purpose. The Act directs the BLM to manage all of McGregor Range in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Management would consist of continuance of livestock grazing, protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat, recreation, and control of predators and other animals.

This legislation also called for a Land Use Plan for all of McGregor Range. BLM has been given the responsibility for completing this plan which will analyze and recommend future multiple-use management for this area. As a

result of this legislation, WSRA is currently in the process of preparing an amendment to the WSRA Resource Management Plan. This amendment should be completed in November 1989.

The leasing procedures were changed in 1987. Seven of the 14 units were selected for 5-year contracts. This action was intended to stabilize the livestock operation on McGregor Range and it was hoped that local operators would be better able to compete for units.

Except for the change to a 5-year lease, the livestock operation has remained the same. Rangeland studies are conducted throughout the year to monitor grazing use and to make determinations of stocking levels for the next lease period. Moisture conditions during the first part of 1987 were slightly above the long-term average especially during the summer growing season. This situation allowed for increased forage production and for a slight increase in livestock numbers in all units over previous years.

In 1986 and 1987, the military expanded their mission. The increase in firing dates has resulted in more road closures and more restriction on access to most portions of McGregor Range.

The following improvements were completed by the maintenance crew:

1. Three miles of fence
2. Two cattleguards
3. Two corrals were rebuilt

1987 SALES RESULTS

Unit	Acres	No. of Cattle	Total AUMs	Bid AUM	Total Contract	Bidder's Address
One Year Contracts						
1	31,000	200	1,800	$4.00	$ 7,200	Estancia, NM
7	19,000	350	3,150	4.00	12,600	Morton, TX
8	17,000	250	2,250	4.00	9,000	Weed, NM
10	12,000	300	2,700	4.00	10,800	Tucumcari, NM
11	18,000	350	3,150	4.00	12,600	Tucumcari, NM
12	8,000	150	1,350	5.15	6,952	Gray Mtn., AZ
Three Year Contract						
4	13,000	275	7,425	4.00	29,700	Crystal City, TX
Five Year Contracts						
2	25,000	200	9,000	6.00	54,000	La Luz, NM
3	32,000	300	13,500	4.10	55,350	Chaparral, NM
5	20,000	350	15,750	7.00	111,037	Crystal City, TX
9	31,000	750	33,750	4.00	135,000	McIntosh, NM
13	20,000	475	21,375	4.00	85,500	Crystal City, TX
Total					$529,739	

1987 INCOME

Unit	Received
1	$ 74,200
2	10,800
3	11,070
4	9,900
5	18,130
7	12,600
8	9,000
9	27,000
10	10,800
11	12,600
12	6,952
13	22,800
TOTAL	$158,852

MOISTURE CONDITIONS

Overall for the entire Resource Area, 1986 and 1987 were above average in the amount of precipitation received. There were some areas that received lesser amounts of rainfall, namely the Monticello, New Mexico area and the east side of Otero County, west of the Guadalupe Mountains.

WILDLIFE

The WSRA Wildlife Program continued monitoring of 18 deer browse transects on McGregor Range and the Caballo Mountains. Browse utilization and form class were at acceptable use levels. The Caballo mountains continue to show little deer use. A pronghorn antelope count was conducted on McGregor Range to determine the current population level. The total population was approximately 700 animals.

The wildlife program provided input for seven fifth-year grazing agreements in the Caballo planning unit. Wildlife needs were addressed in the cooperative grazing agreements as needed.

Three wildlife waters on the Jornada del Muerto (two on B. Cain's allotment No. 6020 for pronghorn antelope and one on R. Hille's allotment No. 6018 for deer on Caballo Mountain) were started and finished in FY 88. Three wildlife water locations for pronghorn antelope have been identified in the Jornada del Muerto Habitat Management Plan (HMP). The projects will be constructed with wildlife funds.

A draft of the Sierra County Riparian Area HMP was completed and is now awaiting finalization. The plan will address the diverse riparian areas in Sierra County on an area-by-area basis since each area has its own unique circumstances. New areas will be added as the plan progresses. The first area addressed will be Percha Creek on allotment No. 6090 (Sterling Roberts). Future areas of consideration will be Palomas Creek, Ash Spring east and west of the Caballo Mountains, and Cuchillo Negro Creek.

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